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FOR EAP/PD, EAP/MTS AND IIP/S
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SUBJECT: Post Speaker Program - Nan Aron

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. U.S. Speaker Nan Aron, President of the Alliance for Justice, visited Singapore on August 24-26 to discuss non-governmental organization (NGO) management and fundraising. Aron met with university students interested in NGO work, law students, activists and the staff of Malay-Muslim community organizations. Aron shared expertise from her 30 years of experience leading a national association of American public interest and civil rights organizations, and spoke about the role of public interest litigation in advocacy. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Embassy Singapore organized this NGO outreach program as part of Post's public diplomacy efforts to encourage liberalizing trends, promote a positive image of U.S. society and support the development of partner NGOs. Many of Singapore's NGOs rely on government funding and they had expressed a need for increased fundraising capacity to give them more autonomy and allow them to expand their programs.

¶3. (U) The first two days of Aron's program focused on students. At Singapore Management University, Aron participated in a panel discussion with two former Fulbrighters about the role of lawyers and litigation in shaping public policy. The audience, which included students and practicing lawyers, discussed how the law could play a larger role in promoting the public interest in Singapore. Aron also met with undergraduates from the National University of Singapore's University Scholars Program and law students at the NYU@NUS Law School.

¶4. (U) Singapore's system does not encourage activism, but there are a few organizations that advocate for local causes. Aron met for lunch with five representatives from groups that focus on AIDS, wildlife preservation, migrant workers and human rights. The group discussed their common challenges and the environment for advocacy in Singapore.

¶5. (U) Aron's final event was a talk on fundraising strategies to a group of 50 staff members from Malay-Muslim community groups. Aron focused on the role of board members, how to solicit wealthy donors and how to draft an effective fundraising letter.